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who like to talk all at once with great vehemence) will easily believe that the coöperative spirit is too frequently absent from French societies of coöperative name. But as in the president's chair, so here, Professor Gide preserves the philosopher's calm and the firmness of the man of science in all his zeal of propaganda. Socialism and the revolutionary spirit are two other great causes of the backwardness of French coöperation. But, despite the potency of these three causes, Professor Gide has faith in the future of coöperation in his country. He is himself of that elect band who choose to dwell on the coöperative ideal, when they address societies of consumers or producers, rather than on points of bookkeeping or matters of buying and selling. Vansittart Neale and G. J. Holyoake are his brothers in spirit, not the directors of the English Wholesale Society. But with his main reliance on ideas, he is faithful to humble fact and duly concerned to give it proper place. The student of coöperation in France will not find a better statement of the record, the present situation, and the strength and the weakness of the movement than is given by this unpretending but very readable and entirely trustworthy volume.

NICHOLAS P. GILMAN.

MEADVILLE, PENN.

An Inquiry into the Conditions relating to the Water Supply of the City of New York. By the MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, 1900. — xxxix, 627 pp.

This large volume is typical of the best and, at the same time, the worst features in American public life. It is probably the most elaborate, painstaking and scientific work yet produced by public or private authority on the water supply or any other important department of an American city. The fact that the investigation was undertaken by a voluntary association of merchants and carried out entirely under the direction — and also at the expense — of this body shows, as has been shown so often before, that improvements in the public service in this country usually come from private initiative, rather than from trained expert public officials. Such private initiative cannot, however, generally be invoked except in the face of actual or imminent public wrong of the most flagrant sort.

The story told by the work under review is simple, yet startling. On August 16, 1899, the commissioner of water supply of New York presented to the board of public improvements for confirmation a contract with a private water company — the Ramapo Company — for

furnishing the city with an additional minimum supply of 200,000,000 gallons of water a day for a period of forty years, beginning with 1902. The stipulated price was seventy dollars a million gallons, delivered near the northern limits of the city. Under this arrangement the city would have paid this company more than \$5,000,000 annually for forty years, and would still have had to meet all the costs of distributing the water — estimated at ten dollars a million gallons. Furthermore, at the end of the period the city would have been compelled to renew the contract on conditions determined by the company itself.

The commissioner of water supply asked for the immediate approval of this contract by the board, on the grounds that a genuine water famine threatened the city before it could construct new works if it had the money and that, under existing conditions, constitutional limitations prevented the city from raising sufficient money to build the necessary works. Of course it was claimed, also, that if there were no other difficulties, the contract price was less than the water could be furnished for under public ownership and management. Although a majority of the members of the board of public improvements expressed themselves at this meeting as in favor of the contract, Controller Coler, a member of the board, got action on the contract postponed for two weeks—not for four, or even three, weeks, as he asked in turn. Then he made a partial report of such vigor as to compel further postponement, to give time for investigation.

The Merchants' Association then came to the rescue and conducted an investigation which lasted till August, 1900. The nature of their work is shown by the statement of the president:

For more than seven months the Committee on Water Supply has labored with great earnestness and persistence. The sub-committees have met from two to five times per week; some of the members have given constant daily supervision to the subject in their charge; others have given much time to special investigations. . . .

The committee has employed continuously a paid working staff of from twenty-five to thirty-three persons, comprising six principal engineers, each in charge of a special division of the work, with the necessary assistant engineers, draftsmen, stenographers, etc. [p. xxviii].

Each of the sub-committees—including among their members some of the ablest men in their respective lines in New York—makes one or more formal printed reports, on which the report of the whole committee is based. The report covers substantially every important phase of the past, present and future water supply.

The present consumption of water in New York is about 371 million gallons daily. Any very considerable enlargement of this supply will require new sources. Of this supply, "which approximates the lowest (per capita) consumption in any large city," about forty-five per cent is pumped and the remainder is furnished by gravity. Even with some decrease in waste and some enlargement of the present works, the present sources cannot be counted on for an adequate supply beyond the year 1910. On the other hand, to construct works and procure enough good water from suitable sources will require about seven years after beginning the work.

The Committee concludes that legal obstacles make unavailable all interstate sources and that, in view of probable future needs, but two adequate and suitable sources remain: these are, first, waters from the Adirondack region, to be taken from the upper Hudson at Hadley; and, second, the waters of the Hudson, to be taken above salt water influence at Poughkeepsie. Either source would furnish from 1000 to 1500 million gallons a day. This, with the present supply, is considered sufficient for a population of from fifteen to eighteen millions. The estimated cost of an additional supply from Poughkeepsie of 250 million gallons daily is 36.8 million dollars for construction and 2.58 million dollars for annual maintenance, or an average cost (at the city limits) of \$28.33 per million gallons, as compared with \$70 under the proposed Ramapo contract. The cost for 500 million gallons from this source is placed at \$30.39 per million gallons. Figures on the same basis for waters from the upper Hudson at Hadley are, for 250 million gallons, \$30 a million gallons; for 500 million gallons, \$29.25 per million gallons.

Although the records of the water department are chaotic and deficient (a condition already greatly improved as a result of this report), the Committee concludes that in the sixty-seven years to the close of 1898 the capital investment in the water works amounts to 86.3 million dollars, and the charges for interest, maintenance, and operation amount to 66.5 million dollars. This, with gross earnings of 88 million dollars, leaves a net profit of 21.4 million dollars from operation. The city has received on an average but \$52.87 per million gallons for all water furnished by the Croton works since 1865. The profits from the present system were nearly \$2,000,000 in 1898, while the estimated annual profits by 1910 are put at about \$4,000,000. It ought also to be noted that this estimate was made before the Merchants' Association discovered by a later investigation, the results of which were made public November 22, 1900, that

there is since 1879 an unexplained deficiency in the water fund of \$4,107,372. This deficiency is in no measure due to uncollected bills, but is a clear discrepancy between the official reports of the value of water sold and the alleged water receipts, after deducting all bills reported as uncollected. As compared with the proposed price of \$70, the Committee finds that the cost for the water from the Croton system in 1849 was but \$54.20; the average cost from 1868-1898 (inclusive) was \$35.06, and for the year 1898 but \$29.07. The cost of water from the Croton works from 1898 to 1910, the latest period for which present sources will suffice, "will be under \$25 and probably in the neighborhood of \$20" (p. 7).

The final and total loss by accepting the Ramapo contract, as compared with procuring water under municipal ownership and operation, is put down at \$195,460,070.87 for the term of forty years. The Committee shows conclusively that no insuperable constitutional or statutory provisions prevent the city from furnishing its own water. Not the least interesting part of the report is that which shows how the Ramapo Company — chartered in 1887, under an act of 1848 — by insidious means and slow degrees succeeded in getting from the legislature greater powers of condemnation than any city or village in the state had. At the same time, and in the same occult manner, the company put through legislation depriving New York City of the right to get water from certain sources without the consent of the county authorities, or to get it from any sources whatever by condemnation, provided that said sources were already used in whole or in part for supplying water to any other locality. Under this legislation the Ramapo Company had already obtained control of many of the best sources before descending upon the city with its proposed contract. Having itself got a legal monopoly of nearly all the available sources, and having tied the hands of the city by legislation, the company evidently thought the way clear for a contract very favorable to itself.

The volume under review is a monument at the same time to the indifference of the mass of the people on matters touching the general welfare and to the genuine public spirit of some of the citizens of New York. It marks an era in the investigation of municipal government in America. The work is well supplied with maps, charts, drawings, diagrams and statistical tables. It will prove indispensable to any one interested in the water supply from almost any standpoint, and useful to those interested in any of the broader phases of our political or civic life. JOHN H. GRAY.